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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: ANGER TOWARD THE US IN SMALL-TOWN ANATOLIA

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner, for Reasons 1.4 (b ,d)

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. A visit to an Anatolian village and its nearby subprovincial capital provided a window into the deep anger many small-town citizens currently feel toward the United States. Preoccupied by daily reports of "our sons" being killed by Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorists in the southeast and media accusations of US perfidy, the villagers passionately protested that the United States has abandoned its friendship with Turkey in favor of the Iraqi Kurds and even the PKK itself. END SUMMARY.

Taslica Village: Steeped in Myth...

¶2. (U) Taslica village consists of roughly twenty houses clustered amid the hills of Central Anatolia and is the site of minor religious tourism. Legends are commonplace, with the villagers believing their town to be the source of Anatolia's namesake. They claim a local woman invited a group of Seljuk (pre-Ottoman) soldiers to fill their canteens with ayran (a salty yogurt-like drink) from her stone bowl. Miraculously, she produced enough ayran to fill the canteens of the whole army, prompting each soldier to say, "Ana, dolu (Mother, it's full)." The villagers maintain a shrine to this woman, and various subsidiary legends have arisen around the central myth, which the villagers earnestly recount as fact.

... Tradition

¶3. (U) The villagers traditionally subsisted by cultivating wheat and barley. Economic changes prompted the village's younger inhabitants to move to nearby Kizilcahamam, Ankara, and Istanbul. As a result, the village fields lie fallow and the remaining inhabitants are quite poor. Government authorities have attempted to persuade the villagers to capitalize on the steady stream of visitors to the Anadolu shrine, but villagers deem this incompatible with their duty to receive guests. Indeed, they were courteous, warm and generous with us, even though the message they conveyed was bitter.

... And Media

¶4. (C) Despite their hospitality, they were unvarnished in accusing the US of jettisoning Turkey in favor of the Kurds

and charged that we would not support the Iraqi Kurds if we were Turkey's true friend. With pained disappointment, they reminded us of our shared struggles in the Korean War and the Cold War. The current fight against the PKK is clearly of great importance to them; every "martyr" killed by the terrorist PKK is a personal loss for their own families. They accused the United States of supporting "tribal leaders" Barzani and Talabani and of opposing Turkish efforts to root out the PKK in northern Iraq.

15. (C) As the villagers built up steam, they moved on to blame the US for forcing Turkey to abolish capital punishment, and specifically for forcing them to "keep feeding (PKK leader Abdullah) Ocalan," who they believe currently directs PKK attacks from prison -- with US support. They also were convinced that the US seeks to divide Turkey among Greece, Armenia and Iraq. While the villagers support different political parties, their feelings on these issues were unanimous. A daily fare of factual inaccuracies and hostility toward the US in the media and political rhetoric has contributed to deep anger toward US policies. Visceral in its vehemence, this anger plays a central role in Turkish political debate, even in rural Anatolia.

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